

DARFIELD
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Medical Officer's REPORT.

FOR
1908.

DR. R. F. CASTLE,
M. B. & B. C. CAMB.



Darfield :
H. HARRISON, Printer and Stationer,
1909.

Medical Officer's Report.

1908.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I have much pleasure in presenting you with my Annual Report for the year 1908.—

The vital statistics are as follows :—

The number of registered births is 216.

The gross number of deaths registered in the district is 79 Four residents of the district died in Hospitals etc., outside the district, making the nett total of deaths 83.—

The natural increase of the population therefore amounts to 133.

During the year eleven new houses were built giving a probable further increase in the population of 55.

The population of the district may therefore be estimated at 5,693.

2.

The certified causes of death are as under:—

Measles	...	...	...	1
Diarrhoea	...	...	...	12
Phthisis	...	...	...	3
other Tuberculous Diseases	...	...	...	4
Cancer	...	...	...	1
Bronchitis	...	...	...	10
Pneumonia	...	...	...	9
Other Diseases of Respiraty Organs	...	...	...	1
Alcoholism	...	...	...	2
Cirrhosis of Liver	...	...	...	1
Premature Birth	...	...	...	8
Heart Diseases	...	...	...	5
Accidents	...	...	...	3
All other causes	...	...	...	19
				79

Outside the district deaths were caused by:—

Nephritis	...	...	...	1
Old age	...	...	...	1
Accident	...	...	...	2

The ages at death were as under:—

Under one year	...	...	...	33
One and under five years	...	...	...	15
Five and under fifteen years	...	...	...	3
Fifteen and under twenty-five years	...	...	...	1
Twenty-five and under sixty-five years	...	...	...	23
Sixty-five and upwards...	...	...	...	8
				83
Nett deaths				83

The birth and death rates :—

1.	Birth rate per 1,000 of estimated population	37.8
2.	Death " " " " " "	13.8
3.	Infantile mortality per 1,000 of registered births	148.1

Infectious disease notified during the year :—

Diphtheria	...	..	1
Erysipelas	...	...	1
Scarlet Fever	...	...	12
Enteric Fever	...	..	1
Puerperal Fever	...	...	3

3.

The relative prevalence of Infectious Disease in the different districts :—

	Popu- lation.	Dipht- heria.	Erysi- pelas.	Scarlet Fever.	Typh- oid.	Puer- pural.
Edderthorpe, Tyas Hill, and Newhall	100					
Low Valley	1,690		1	2		1
Darfield Proper and Snape Hill.....	3,236	1		9	1	2
Darfield Bridge and Mill Houses	667			1		

The relative death rate of the different districts :—

	Popul- ation.	Deaths.	Rate per 1,000.
Edderthorpe, Tyas Hill and Newhall...	100		
Low Valley	1,690	23	13
Darfield Proper and Snape Hill	3,236	44	13·5
Darfield Bridge and Mill Houses.....	667	12	17·9

Comparing the statistics of this year with those of last year, there is an improvement in every particular :—

1. Birth rate of 1907 was 36·1
Birth rate of 1908 was 37·8 per 1,000.
2. Death rate of 1907 was 16·53
Death rate of 1908 was 13·8 per 1,000.
3. Infantile mortality of 1907 was 201
Infantile mortality of 1908 was 148·1 per
1,000 registered births.

The most frequent cause of death is still 'Diarrhœa':-

No doubt most of this is due to infection of the food supplies whether it may be milk, butter, bread or meat which is most polluted matters little. No doubt the household food is generally more or less polluted during the Summer months. This year, the number of house flies seemed to be far in excess of that usually noticed and I have no doubt that these insects beside acting as scavengers do convey impurity from one place to another; they also are a great annoyance to those who are ill and helpless, preventing the patients from obtaining the rest of which they are so much in need.

I have no doubt that the Privy Midden System favours the growth of Flies and is one source from which the food becomes contaminated:—

In townships where this system has been suddenly replaced by the water closet system the death rates have fallen in a most surprising manner:—

Tuberculous disease is still responsible for a large proportion of the total deaths; as a Township Darfield takes no steps to prevent the spread of the disease.

With regard to Infectious disease, the year has been a fortunate one, for, with epidemics of one kind and another all round us, we have only had 18 cases of infectious disease notified during the year. (compared with 28 cases in 1907).

When making my regular inspections of the district I still find that many of the back-yards are in a very dirty and untidy state, while the parents often take no trouble to train their children in cleanly and decent habits.

Many of the public roads are a disgrace to the township owing to the quantity of refuse of all kinds thrown outo them, a condition which I have never seen tolerated in any place except a colliery township. In this connection I do not mean to blame the Council Officials, for a very few hours after they have finished cleaning the roads the condition is again as bad or worse owing to the untidy habits of the users of the roads.

I think that the pollution of the air gets worse year by year ; at any rate I think the fogs have been denser and more unpleasant this year than I can remember them having been in the past.

The condition of the Factories and Workshops is unchanged, with the exception of the re-opening of a small stone quarry in 'Cat Hill'. These men work in the open, but have a refuge hut for bad weather.

The road in the neighbourhood of the quarry has often been in a very bad condition owing to the heavy carting.

With regard to the general health of the district ; there has been a very marked increase in contagious disease, much in evidence amongst the children, but by no means confined to them :-

A very large number of cases of Scabies (Itch), Children and Adults infested with lice, Ringworm, Contagious conjunctivitis (ophthalmia) and children afflicted with a discharge from the ear come to me and no doubt to the neighbouring medical men for treatment.

The cure of these diseases takes time and causes considerable trouble to the parents. Many of the parents soon become disheartened when they find that the remedies prescribed do not effect a rapid cure and from that time allow the disease to run its course unchecked; the child runs wild, gets no schooling and infects others in the play hours :—

No doubt the indiscriminate use of public conveyances with seats and cushions of comparatively soft material helps to spread these diseases.

The question of treatment is a very difficult one; the main brunt of the toil must fall upon the parents; but I think that a district nurse would be invaluable as a means of encouraging and directing their labours.

In this connection, I have suggested the erection of Public Baths which could be used for medication, or not, at will, and which should have a stoving chamber connected with them.

However hard a Nurse may work in an infected house, if the clothing and bedding of the patients cannot be stoved, the disease will inevitably shortly return again

I should again like to recommend—

1. The employment of a District Nurse.

7.

2. The placing of more receptacles for waste paper.
3. The asphaltting of difective back yards, at any rate in the proximity of the houses.

I remain, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

R. F. CASTLE.

Darfield Urban District Council.

Council Offices, Darfield.

1st January, 1909.

Sanitary Inspector's Report.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

I beg to submit to you my Annual Report for the year ending 31st December, 1908, as follows :-

Scavenging.

The Scavenging work has been kept in good order and well attended to.

During the year 2,952 ashpit emptyings have taken place, 2,364 loads of nightsoil and 1,169 loads of refuse have been carted away.

A total of 263 days work, or $87\frac{1}{3}$ days for each horse and cart, has been done in the Highways Department in Street Cleansing and Watering, Road Improvements and Repairing &c.

Calculated at 8/- per day this represents a value of £105 4s. 0d.

Compared with last year there is an increase of 263 ashpit emptyings, 284 loads of nightsoil and 88 loads of refuse carted away, and 4 days work done on the Highways.

The wages paid in Scavanging during the year amounted to £229 5s. 3d., as compared with £206 11s. 8d. paid in the year 1907.

Nuisances :

The total number of nuisances registered during the year was 39; unabated at end of last year brought forward 3 ; making a total of 42. Of these, 38 have been abated, leaving 4 in hand. In addition to these several minor matters have been dealt with personally.

Disinfecting :

During the year there has been 12 cases of Scarlet Fever, one case of Diphtheria and one case of Typhoid Fever removed to the Hospital and the houses disinfected

One other case of Typhoid Fever occurred which could not be removed to Hospital.

Inspection of District :

General Weekly Inspections of most of the properties in the district have been continued throughout the year.

House-to-House Inspections :

Have been continued during the year.

Overcrowding :

Three cases of overcrowding have been dealt with and several notices served for cleansing of dirty bedrooms

Cowsheds :

Regular inspections of cowsheds have been made during the year. They are kept in a fairly clean condition. Limewashing is done regularly.

Milk Samples :

During the year 11 samples of New Milk have been taken. On analysis 9 were found to be genuine. One sample was found to have been deprived of a portion of its natural fat, by skimming or similar treatment. It contained only 93·3 per cent of the minimum proportion of fat (that is 3 per cent) natural to genuine new milk and required by the Board of Agriculture.

The other sample was found to contain $8\frac{1}{6}$ parts per cent of added water. Also it contained only 7·8 per cent of non fatty solids, instead of at least 8·5 per cent.

The sample also contained only 86·6 per cent of the minimum proportion of fat (3 per cent) natural to genuine new milk, and required by the Board of Agriculture.

In this latter case proceedings were instituted and a conviction obtained.

Slaughter Houses and Offensive Trades :

Frequent and regular inspections of these places were made during the year. They are kept in good condition and the limewashing is done regularly.

There are 5 Slaughter Houses and 2 Tripe Dressing Places in the district.

Pigsties :

Are kept in a fairly clean condition. No complaints have been received.

Factories and Workshops :

Several inspections were made during the year.
They are kept in a satisfactory condition.

Insufficient Closet Accomodation :

As the result of notices served during 1907, upon Owners to provide additional closet accomodation to their respective properties ; 3 Fresh Water Closets and 7 Ash-pit Closets have been erected to existing houses.

Six others are yet to be built for which plans have been passed.

Ashpits and Closets :

The ashpits and privies to three different blocks of properties, comprising 8 privies and 4 ashpits have been entirly rebuilt as the result of notices served by me : and the ashpits to 4 other blocks of properties have been improved by raising the floors and concret-ing same, and providing screens with proper doors and fastenings.

Drains :

During the year the drains to 28 houses have been taken up and entirely reconstructed. Inspection chambers built in same, intercepting traps fixed and ventilating pipes erected at the head of drains.

New Property :

Eleven houses (five roomed) with ashpit privies have been erected during the year.

Plans have been passed among others for :—

Four Dwelling Houses.
Four Fresh Water Closets and
Nine Privies above mentioned.
Four Pigsties.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

ERNEST HAMMERTON.